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Arab suit alleges spying for Israel

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The National Association of Arab Americans yesterday filed suit against the Department of Justice in a bid to force the release of records of an investigation for alleged espionage for Israel by Stephen David Bryen, who is now a senior Pentagon official.

Bryen is the deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security policy. His duties include curbing the leaking of U.S. military technology to foreign countries.

The suit seeks to force Justice officials into showing how two-thirds of a 600-page file on Bryen in Justice's criminal division came to be lost. It also asks for the appointment of a special prosecutor "to investigate whether arbitrary and capricious withholding of documents has occurred."

Two government attorneys who inves-

tigated Bryen in 1978 and 1979, including one who is still with the criminal division, told The Washington Times they do not believe that the file could actually have been lost, as claimed by Douglas S. Wood, chief of the division's Freedom of Information section, in a letter to Jean AbiNader, president of the NAAA.

In 1981, the file was given to the Senate Armed Services Committee, which later returned it to Justice.

AbiNader first requested the Bryen file under the FOI Act in 1980, when Bryen was an aide to the late Sen. Clifford Case, R-N.J. On Dec. 28, 1982, AbiNader received parts of a short "working file."

On March 9, 1978, Michael P. Saba, a North Dakota businessman, contacted then-Attorney General Griffin Bell to say he had overheard Bryen talking with members of the Israel defense staff in the coffeshop of the Madison Hotel in Washington. Saba swore in an affidavit that he had heard Bryen offering to give

the Israel's a classified Pentagon document that he had obtained through his Senate duties.

Saba said Bryen also was instructing the Israelis on how to lobby Congress against the sale of F-15 fighters to Saudi Arabia. He said Bryen used the word "we" to refer to the Israelis and "they" to refer to the United States.

Saba, who was executive director of the NAAA from 1976 until 1977, later volunteered to take a lie-detector test, which he passed.

Under questioning by two FBI agents, Bryen described his coffeshop companions as Israeli defense officials and diplomats.

During the investigation, Bryen also took a leave of absence from his Senate post. He later became director of the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs, which is now headed by his wife, Shoshana.